



H.E. Dr Qu Dongyu
Director-General
FAO Headquarters
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Roma RM, Italy

Rome, August 12th, 2019

Dear Dr Qu,

we are writing to congratulate you on your election and the beginning of your mandate as Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

The majority obtained in the first round demonstrates wide-ranging support from Member-States, and we hope that your term as Director-General will be a testimony to shared decision-making and consensus.

As Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the most populous country in the world, you are aware of the challenges that a rising world population brings for the international community.

We believe that science and scientific progress can offer a solution that can at least contribute to the solution of the problem. Modern gene-editing techniques, such as Crispr-cas9, allow to produce more food while using less land, less water, and less chemical products.

We are aware of the resistance by many governments to allow even open-field trials of new breeding techniques, but we call for your leadership and commitment in using your new role to promote their widespread adoption.

Many countries in the developing world, and in particular Africa, where the People's Republic of China has been very supportive of local agriculture through investment partnerships, are anxious to see widespread acceptance of gene-editing techniques become a reality, so as to have better trade opportunities.

In this respect, we would like to inform you that we are organizing the 6th session of the World Congress on the Freedom of Scientific Research in Addis Ababa in February 2020. New breeding techniques will form an important part of the agenda, and we would be honored to have you as a speaker.

We would be delighted to tell you more about the Congress and about our initiatives on the topic in person, should you wish to accept our request for a face to face conversation.

Renewing our congratulations on your election, we hope that we can work together in the future.

Kind regards,

Marco Perduca, former Italian Senator and President of Science for Democracy

Marco Cappato, former MEP and Treasurer of the Associazione Luca Coscioni